

The Heavy Laden Called. M. tt. 11: 25-30.

The Great Invitation. Isaiah 55: 1-13

The Last Invitation. Rev. 22: 1-17.

#### Introductory Notes

This parable was spoken but three days before the crucifixion. It was really the last of his public ministry and a very busy day as indeed all his days were. Just now, however he seems to be crowding a week into each day. The parable was spoken in the temple, the last day Jesus spent in it. He was making every effort possible to lead the Jews to accept him as the Messiah and come into the kingdom and take possession as they had a right and as God meant they should.

#### Meaning of the Text

1. *Jesus Answered.* To the thoughts and feelings of the rulers and others awakened by his former discourse. See 21: 45. *By parables.* A method Jesus employed in presenting and teaching religious truth.

2. *Kingdom—heaven.* The spiritual rule of Christ on earth. *Certain king.* It is likened unto a king, etc. God himself is the King, while the king's son is Jesus. *Marriage.* That is a marriage feast. The marriage is between Christ and his church, which is often called the bride. Eph. 5: 23-27. Such a feast would represent the great abundance which God has provided in the gospel for sinners.

3. *Sent—servants.* In accordance with the Oriental custom. The invitation was given some time in advance and when the time had come for the feast servants were sent to inform the guests that all was ready. The earliest invitation was to the Jews, the later to all people by John the Baptist.

3. *Other servants.* Who were to speak of the richness of the feast. *My dinner.* Not the chief meal, but the earlier meal preceding the marriage supper which came in the evening. The invitation was repeated.

5. *Made light of it.* They treated the invitation as of no consequence, and gave themselves no concern about it. *Went their way.* They went on with their worldly affairs, having more interest in their farms and merchandise than in the marriage feast.

6. *The remnant.* Some of the invited treated the invitation with simple neglect, while others became openly hostile. *Spitefully.* Persecuted and insulted them. So did the Jewish nation to the prophets and now also to Christ.

7. *He was wroth.* Because his subjects had so scorned the invitation to the royal feast. *Destroyed.* The primary reference is to the destruction of Jerusalem.

8-10. *Not worthy.* They had proved themselves unworthy by their treatment of the invitation. *Highways.* The partings of the highways, where roads meet. At these points people were apt to congregate. *Bad and good.* Shows the wideness and freeness of the gospel offer.

11-14. *See the guests.* To inspect them. The custom was to furnish each guest a

proper garment for the royal feast. So there would be no excuse if not fitly apparelled. Christ furnishes the robe of righteousness, some however wear their own, which is the robe of self-righteousness. *Friend.* Comrade or companion. *Camest thou?* The act was surprising and inexcusable. *Speechless.* He could not answer for he was without excuse. *Bind him.* No escape from just punishment. *Darkness.* The darkness outside the king's palace. *Weeping—gnashing.* The first word indicates sorrow and the other rage. *Many—called—few.* The meaning is plain as to the parable. The "called" are the invited, the "chosen" those who accept.

#### Lesson Points

God invites men to share in the joys and privileges of the Gospel, a feast in which all may sit down to enjoy fellowship with himself, his Son, and the redeemed among men. How high the honor, and how rich the enjoyment.

2. Men fail to accept and heed the invitation of God. Some are busy and pass it by, some scorn it, some persecute its messengers; only a few, apparently, avail themselves of its privileges.

3. God is very kind, and he repeats his call, pressing it upon men. But God is just, and his justice requires that wrath shall fall upon those who thus scorn and reject him. How fearful the responsibility upon those who will not come to Christ.

4. The Gospel invitation bids all to come as they are, but it provides for every one who comes the wedding garment of a new heart, a new life, and the righteousness of Christ. Let us put on the new man in Jesus Christ.

5. Those who are found among God's people without the newness of character which God gives will be cast out from his presence into darkness and misery.

#### For the Teachers' Meeting

Show when, where, to whom, and for what purpose this parable was delivered. Compare it with "the parable of the excuses" (Luke 14: 1-24), and note the differences of circumstances and contents. Analyze this parable, and present an application of its elements.

*The King.* Who is he? What traits of character or royalty does he show?

*The Son.* Who is he? In what relation to us is he represented?

*The Feast.* How does this feast represent the Gospel? What are the enjoyments at a feast? Who partake in it? What does it promise to us? What does it require of us?

*The Messengers.* Who are they? What is their message? How are they treated by men?

*The Guests.* Find three kinds of people who did not go. Find two kinds who did go.

*The Garment.* What is it? Who wear it? Who are without it? What becomes of such? Finally, what does this parable urge us to do and to be?

#### The Gospel Like A Feast

The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a marriage feast. In what sense. 1. Abundant in provision. 2. Free provision. 3. Satisfies every want. 4. Congenial society. 5. Good fellowship. 6. The best of provisions. 7. A joyful feast. This is not an ordinary feast, it is the marriage feast for the king's son. 1. The king is God himself. He gives the feast, and to him belong all things. 2. Jesus Christ is himself the bridegroom. 3. The church is the bride, including all God's children whom he dearly loves. 4. The servants who give the invitation are the ministers of the gospel, teachers, Sunday school workers, and all others in the service of the Master.

#### The Lesson Applied

*The Gospel a Feast.* The gospel is here represented as a feast, and that too as a marriage feast. A marriage feast beautifully represents the blessings of divine grace. First of all it suggests the richest and best a man has to give. So we have in the gospel the very best that heaven itself had to give. What richer blessing could God have found in all his dominion than what he gave to the world? He gave himself. Christ, forgiveness of sin, peace, joy, the Holy Spirit, what a feast this is for man; it is the divine banquet, prepared by the king of heaven. Then too, a marriage feast suggests plenteousness. What man would be stingy at such a time? So in the gospel there is great abundance, enough for all who will come. Associated with the marriage feast is that of joy and gladness. At such times there is merry-making. So the gospel brings to all who accept it the deepest joy. It is the joy of pardoned sin, the joy of life eternal. What a glorious feast is this gospel of the Son of God. Earth's feasts last but for a little while but here is a feast that will continue thro eternity.

2. *Made Light of It.* Here is one way of treating the gospel. The great wonder of wonders is that poor mortals would make light of an invitation to such a feast as God has prepared in this gospel. Indeed if men knew the rich blessings offered to them in the blessed gospel they would accept the invitation with thankful hearts and come and feast on the good things the dear Lord has prepared for them. But so it is. There are many people who are not opposed to the gospel and the Christ, that is, they imagine they are not. They are not infidels and scoffers, but theirs is an attitude of utter indifference to the claims of the gospel, but this is making light of the greatest and most serious things that have to do with this life and the life that is to be.

*The Wrong Garment.* Here is another way of treating the gospel, it is that of hypocrites. This man came in his own way, in his own righteousness, or rather, self-righteousness. He thought church membership is the garment, but it is not; Christ's righteousness alone will suffice.